

## MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

# NEWS



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**SPECIAL TO THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE**  
**SUBJECT: CHEMICAL FIRE PROMPTS STATE OF EMERGENCY**

**NOV. 6, 2000**

(Jackson) – Under the leadership of Gov. Ronnie Musgrove, Lt. Governor Amy Tuck on Friday night signed a State of Emergency Proclamation that allowed state agencies to assist local government with response to a chemical fire in the Port of Helena (Ark.). Smoke from the fire had drifted into Mississippi prompting the evacuation of the Isle of Capri casino on Friday.

MEMA Director Robert Latham, after consultation with Gov. Musgrove, requested Lt. Gov. Tuck sign the proclamation when state agencies began responding to the incident.

Gov. Musgrove, out of state at the time of the incident, directed Lt. Gov. Tuck as Acting Governor to sign the emergency proclamation as an effort to provide a coordinated State response to the chemical fire, and so that MEMA and other state agencies could lend support to Coahoma County officials and residents. State agencies assisting the Coahoma County Emergency Management Agency, the Coahoma County Sheriff's Office and the Coahoma County Board of Supervisors were MEMA, Miss. Dept. of Environmental Quality, the Mississippi Highway Patrol, the Mississippi Gaming Commission and the Mississippi Department of Transportation.

"It was a well-coordinated response Friday evening," said Musgrove. "I commend all the state and local agencies that pulled together to ensure the safety and welfare of our citizens during this unfortunate event."

Coahoma County officials had ordered a two-mile evacuation zone on the Mississippi-side of the river. The MDOT and the MHP were instrumental in closing down both the U.S. Hwy. 49 Mississippi River Bridge and portions of Hwy. 49 where it intersected with U.S. 1 and with U.S. 61.

MDEQ's Office of Pollution Control responded to the incident and provided technical support to Coahoma County, MEMA and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IV.

MGC responded to the casino shut-down with officials from MGC's Tunica County office, and conducted state law-required audits prior to the Casino's reopening on Saturday.

The incident, which was a zinc-oxide fire at the Global Materials Service warehouse, was concluded by about midnight on Nov. 3.

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